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ABSTRACT

Leadership has been the central focus of research in the field of educational administration. Most studies have been based on the experiences of white males. It is important for women to be able to identify and evaluate their own personal characteristics. This study was conducted to increase awareness of the characteristics and attributes of female public school principals. Its purpose was to identify the characteristics and attributes of female public school principals; develop a greater understanding of female principals' characteristics, attributes, and attitudes; and demonstrate that personal characteristics are similar across cultural and ethnic boundaries. Nine female principals were interviewed and the resulting data analyzed qualitatively. Five significant characteristics were identified: drive to achieve, use of spiritual values, involvement in professional organizations, involvement as a community leader, and valuing personal relationships. Despite different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, years of experience, and age differences, all these women faced the same challenges and share a common set of values and a similar belief system. It is hoped that this study will provide insight to aspiring female principals and to superintendents when hiring prospective female principals. An appendix contains an interview outline modified and used for this study. (Contains 22 references.) (RT)

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Advancing Women

Advancing Women In Leadership

Crossing Borders: An Analysis of the Characteristics and Attributes of Female Public School Principals

Leslie A. Holtkamp, Ed.D.

HOLTKAMP, WINTER, 2002

The female principal,s role is diverse, fragmented, and involves numerous decisions daily. It is important for women to be able to identify and evaluate their own personal characteristics.

Leadership has been the central focus of research in the field of educational administration. Most studies have largely been based on the experiences of white males (Blackmore, 1989; Capper, 1993; Glazer, 1991) in the field of school administration. Historically, leadership roles have been held by men (Capper, 1993; Sloan, 1999). Because of this social attitude, women have been reluctant to pursue educational, administrative leadership positions (Epp, 1993).

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As of the mid-1990,s, women comprised 50% of the workforce. Women held 13% of management positions, and held only 7% of executive positions (Hagberg, 1998). In the areas of school administration, men outnumber women four to one at the administrative level (Lynch, 1990). "In the years between 1928 and 1984, the number of women principals continually dropped from 55 % to 18%" (Lynch, 1990, p. 336). These data mirror the drop in the representation of women throughout the educational administration field (Capper, 1993; Sloan 1999). While a recent survey of school superintendents indicated that the number of women at all levels of school administration is slowly increasing; women's representation in

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school administration is far from being proportionate to their numbers in education (Hagberg, 1998; Sloan, 1999). Sloan (1999) reported that the number of Australian female principals have increased from 15.3% in 1991 to 29.5% in 1999. The Australian Department of Education Secretary, Geoff Spring, has increased efforts to train and promote female teachers to administrative positions (Sloan, 1999). At a 1998 conference, Spring said, "Women make up almost 70% of the workforce in school education, are highly qualified and achieving increasing success as they seek and obtain formal leadership roles." He stressed the importance of pride and personal achievement of women in leadership roles but noted, "There is considerable distance to be traveled before women are present in leadership roles in the same ratio as in the education workforce" (Spring, 1998). A special leadership program has been designed for aspiring women educational leaders in Australia to help close the gap (Sloan, 1999).

All women experience barriers. When Black women enter educational administration, there are internal and external barriers to overcome (Gregory, 1999). Gregory (1999) stated that internal barriers are based on both perceptions of one's capability to work in a leadership role, and personal leadership styles. External barriers are described as barriers that an individual has no control over. External barriers might include lack of resources and not being included in collaborative projects. Also, many black women have reported feelings of isolation (Gregory, 1999).

Role of the Principal

In the 21st century, the principal's role will be different from principals of other generations (Blackmore, 1989; Calabrese, 1996; Gorton, 1993). The 21st century principals will face different problems and concerns. These problems will be more complex and involve outside variables (Calabrese, 1996). These problems will require a different way of thinking and a different way of solving problems. Principals will need to examine their decision-making patterns. The changing demographics of students and parents will increase the need for flexibility. The continued restrictions in funding are a paramount concern for principals. The pressure and demands for higher academic performance will require increased need for action. Increased community intolerance for discipline problems in schools will push for principals to develop new and innovative ways to decrease discipline problems (Blackmore, 1989; Calabrese, 1996). Other changes include: increased demands of alternative forms of education and increased demands for immediate answers and solutions. Principals will be expected to meet these demands and be expected to problem solve on demand. Principals that can meet community expectations will be recognized as leaders (Calabrese, 1996). To meet these

expectations principals must clearly understand their role within the organization, their character and attributes, areas that need improvement, areas that build success, and their personal characteristics.

Organizational Role

Organizations need effective leaders to meet daily challenges. "Most administrators recognize that providing leadership is a major expectation for their role" (Gorton, 1993, p. 67). Cowley (1928) stated, "The leader is the one who succeeds in getting others to follow him" (p. 145). Lipham (1964) made important contributions to the literature on leadership. He made the distinction between the administrator as "the individual who utilizes existing structures or procedures to achieve an organizational goal or objective" (p. 119). Lipham viewed the administrator as the stabilizing force in the organization.

Character and Attributes

What is character? Freeman (1996) described character "In the home, it is kindness; in business, it is honesty; in society, it is courtesy; in work, it is thoroughness; in play, it is fairness" (p. 5). According to Lynch (1990), there are three critical attributes that women in administration should possess. The first is the "degree of compatibility" between the demands of the position and her career objective. A female principal should be intelligent and capable of performing duties that the position requires. A woman's perception of herself is a direct link to her success. (Lynch, 1990). Most women are able to successfully manage this role of administration effectively, and experience success, because they are able to manage the demands of their career and stay on task with career objectives (Marshall, 1999).

According to Lynch (1990), a second attribute that a successful administrator should have is the ability to successfully negotiate barriers. This includes structural barriers and the informal filtering system that organizations use to test and train aspiring principals. This system controls upward mobility. Some women are able to negotiate barriers more successfully than others. The third attribute is being able to "fit" in the organization. The successful administrator should be a good communicator and be able to assess the needs of an organization. Because organizational cultures vary, the ideal administrator may differ in different schools or school districts (Lynch 1990).

The Hagberg Consulting Group (1998) research concluded that women are significantly better leaders, outpacing men in several areas. The areas, or characteristics, that female leaders model are: being able to create and articulate a clear vision; goal setting and setting clear direction; being able to take charge in difficult situations; being inspirational role models; setting high performance standards; and being able to assume responsibilities. The report noted that women's style may be better suited to the leadership challenges of the 90's "because women are better communicators, have better social skills, put success of the team first, use influence skills rather than authority, and are better team players" (Hagberg, 1998, p. 2). According to the study, women may be better at managing a diverse workforce because of less traditional values, and are more tolerant of differences and less bonded by social traditions. In the area of motivating, research supports that women are better at motivating others and are more likely to show appreciation for the efforts of others, more expressive of their feeling and thoughts, and more enthusiastic. The research further concluded that females in leadership positions often have better management skills than men and are more motivating and inspirational (Hagberg, 1998).

Areas of Improvement

The Hagberg consulting group offered areas that women need to improve. The areas of improvement include: start taking risks, let go of details, develop and motivate staff, lead by example, and stop rescuing and mothering. The consulting group concluded that women need to improve the most in the area of rescuing and mothering (Hackney, 1999; Hagberg, 1998; Shepard, 1998). Women who seek to help and try to fix every problem are often perceived as too soft. "Women leaders who value relationships and are relaxed in their leading, are often perceived as too soft, indecisive, weak, and incompetent" (Hackney, 1999, p. 2). Women are still perceived as displaying emotion and being emotional in the work place (Shepard, 1998; Hackney, 1999). Women who exhibit professionalism and intensity are often seen as too cold, too distant, and as a perfectionist (Hackney, 1999; Marcano 1997). These perceptions may, or may not be true. "Perception is reality to the person who is doing the perceiving" (Shepard, 1998, p. 1). This perception may not be the true but is the perception of others.

Areas That Build Success

Women must be conscious of what is perceived by others and develop strategies that are proactive in building success. Wesson (1998) offered tips for aspiring administrators. The first is to "know yourself", which is the most important ingredient for success (Marcano 1997). Marcano (1997) described this as "know thyself" and further stated that it is important to be honest and objective when evaluating your strengths and abilities, as well as your goals. Continual self-assessment is the key to longevity in administration. The second, "be prepared". Some Hispanic women reported that they must prove themselves twice, first because they are females and second because they are Hispanic (Marcano, 1997). Continual professional growth and work experience are an important part of success in educational administration. Be selective when choosing preparation programs, set realistic goals for yourself and others, and seek work experiences that will enable you to be prepared for leadership positions. The next tip is, "analyze and strategize." Administrators make career moves that will maximize your potential for achieving your personal goals. Make career decisions based on your own personal vision. A successful administrator is able to turn "negative work experiences" into positive ones. Negative experiences can provide useful learning experiences (Marcano, 1997). Administration should be informed of "critical factors affecting advancement." These factors consist of structural barriers, role compatibility, and organizational fit. Structural barriers are being at the right place at the right time. Role compatibility is fitting the needs of the organization with the right person. Organizational fit is how a person personally fits the structure of the organization. The researcher writes that administrators should be "affiliate." Join professional organizations that will keep you abreast of the times. "Share goals" and be supportive of others within the organization. When this is achieved, a win-win situation is established and relationships will grow. Relationships can share common goals, teachers will be empowered, and professional networks will form. "Find a mentor and be a mentor." Find an administrator that you respect and emulate their good qualities. As an administrator learns from the mentoring experiences, their personal growth will be enhanced (Duvall, 1980; Marcano 1997; Wesson, 1998). An administrator can grow by being a mentor to someone else. A final tip offered is "networking." It is the process of developing and using contacts for information, advice, and support (Duvall, 1980). The relationship and contacts are very useful in accomplishing goals (Wesson, 1998).

Personal Characteristics

Fennell (1999) interviewed six women principals and focused on their perception of leadership. The results revealed some personal characteristics of female leaders. One leader believed that leaders need to have a clear sense of their own vision and beliefs. She stated that a leader's job is to monitor to ensure that the vision of the organization is being carried out. She also commented that modeling is absolutely crucial. This administrator also believed that leadership is based on two words, "pressure and support" (Fennell, 1999, p. 267).

Another leader interviewed in Fennell study was the youngest and least experienced of the six principals interviewed. She commented that "Leadership is the power to influence people to move in a direction that you believe in your heart is a good direction for most people" (Fennell, 1999, p. 269). Further she stated, a good leader should be a good listener and have good interpersonal skills. She repeatedly emphasized her belief in the importance of valuing working relationships (Fennell, 1999; Marcano, 1997). If coworkers do not feel valued, they will not open up and talk to you when they have an idea or problem. She felt that her biggest strength as a leader was the ability to establish rapport easily and build lasting relationships with staff.

The most experienced administrator interviewed in this study focused on relationships and showing staff that you care. Sensitivity is the key to aid in the problem-solving process among staff. She believed that teachers should be good problem solvers and should empower students to make good decisions.

Another principal that was interviewed who had been a principal for four years believed in being a good listener and a friend. She described herself as being a hard worker with a full agenda. She had set many personal goals for herself and goals for her students and staff.

A principal for eight years focused on sharing a common vision and having dreams. She believed that it is important for a leader to be generally liked but most importantly to be seen as a fair and honest person. Women were driven by a desire to build a since of school pride and spirit in their community (Hackney, 1999; Fennell, 1999).

Another believed that her most import role as principal and leader was to support teachers and help them when they need support. She viewed her role as a supporter in the staff,s professional and personal life. She noted that she is a good delegator and knows how to pull everyone together and to work together for the common good of everyone involved (Hackney, 1999; Fennell, 1999).

Several conclusions were drawn from this study. A school administration should have good interpersonal and listening skills. One subject felt that communication

was number one. Building relationships and caring for others were defined as characteristics of successful administrators. Principals were other-centered (Fennell, 1999; Hackney, 1999). They prioritized relationship in their lives and their moral responsibilities. Attention from the principal,s individual need for admiration is transferred to consideration of other,s needs (Hackney, 1999). Problem solving was a common theme discussed by Fennell (1999).

Another study that focused on female Hispanic principals reported that accurate self-assessment is a personal characteristic that is crucial to a leaders success (Marcano, 1997). Marcano,s (1997) research findings included that it is also important to know your personal strengths and to be able to verbalize your beliefs. Some Hispanic women are unable to explain or verbalize their personal strengths. These women might be misinterpreted as lacking self-esteem by the educational community (Marcano, 1997).

Significance

The significance of my study is to increase awareness of the characteristics and attributes of female public school principals. My study was designed to identify the personal characteristics of female public school principals interviewed. Characteristics identified will be based on principal's personal perceptions of their attributes and personal characteristics. Additionally, the study discovered how and to what extent female principals perceive the impact of these influences on their personal success. Subjects have benefited by gaining insight and being able to verbalize their personal insights about their characteristics as a leader.

Purpose

The purpose in my study was threefold: (a) to identify the characteristics and attributes of female public school principals; (b) to develop a greater understanding of female principals characteristics, attributes, and attitudes; and (c) to demonstrate that personal characteristics are similar across cultural and ethnic boundaries. The study may provide insight to aspiring female principals and to superintendents when hiring prospective female principals. It is important for women to be aware of the positive characteristics of female principals as they seek

positions in educational administration. Awareness would provide women the opportunity to evaluate their personal characteristics and compare them to females that are presently in leadership roles.

Design

I used a qualitative research method to examine personal characteristics of nine female public school principals. The research questions addressed in this research was what were the personal characteristics and attributes of female public school principals; and what did they attribute to their success? A semistructured interview was developed and included twenty-four questions that were designed to answer the research questions. Qualitative analysis of the eight interviews involved identifying codes and themes generated by participants and the comparison of these themes with the existing literature.

Methodology

The primary goal of this study was to add to the body of knowledge by focusing on female public school principals. The study is based on nine interviews (n=9). The research questions were designed to collect information for comparative analysis and to develop common themes.

Participants

The participants in this study represented a "purposeful rather than random" sample (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 86). Nine female public school principals were selected using the following criteria: (a) race; (b) gender; and (c) occupation. My goal was to obtain participation of females who work as public school principals. Two of the female principals interviewed were Costa Rican, two Mexican American, two African American, two White, and one Australian. Experience as building level principal ranged from first year to eight years experience. Participants ranged in age from 36 to 53 years.

Procedure

Data Collection

In this study, 24 open-ended questions were asked in each interview with the nine principals. The interview questions consisted of twenty-four structured questions. Each interview lasted approximately forty minutes. At the end of the interview, the interviewees were given the opportunity to share personal information that would benefit the study.

Research was conducted according to the ethical principles of the American Psychological Association (1996). Prior to the interviews, a human subject form was submitted and approved by the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. Participants signed a form indicating their consent to participate in an audiotaped interview. The interview was audiotaped and transcribed by the researcher. Participants were further informed through a written letter that excerpts from their interview could be published in an anonymous format. Participants were assured that all information would be confidential. Finally, the participants were free to stop the interview and withdraw from the study at any time.

The interview protocol was pilot tested on three female public school principals, their data was not included as part of the analysis. Following the pilot interview, I talked with the three participants and reviewed the interview questions. As a result of the review, I totally removed one of the original questions and restated several other questions. Examples of interview questions in the final protocol include: (a) What are you personal characteristics? (b) How do you personally measure success? (c) What do you attribute to your success? (d) What inner strengths do you pull from in a difficult situation?

Data Analysis

Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim by the researcher and rechecked for accuracy. I listened to the tapes while simultaneously reading the written transcription. A translator assisted me with transcribing the interviews that were in Spanish. I listened to the participant's responses, took handwritten notes, and recorded the interview. Most of the principal,s interviews were conducted in their home or campus. The only exceptions were two of the interviews that were completed via electronic mail. Principals were asked questions about their personal

history, personal character, and personal feelings about success.

Interviews were transcribed and analyzed based on commonalties. Analytic conclusions can be formulated by coding then categorizing similar ideas or statements of experiences from data. Analysis of the data involved a systematic process of collecting it, organizing it, dividing it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, and determining what was important and what should be reported (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Validity

Cross checking information and conclusion through several procedures and sources were utilized in my study (Johnson, 1999). Multi-data source was used based on ethnicity and location. Low inference descriptors that were used in the research included direct quotes and field notes (Johnson, 1999).

Findings

Identified Characteristics

Many themes emerged from the interviews with the female public school principals. However, there were five personal characteristics that were identified and are highly significant. Participants identified the following significant characteristics: driven to achieve (n=9), spiritual (n=9), involved in professional organizations (n=9). Out of the participants, five felt it important to be community leaders (n=5). The five female principals that were included in this theme were two White, one Mexican American, one Costa Rican, and one Australian. Also, five felt it necessary to value personal relationship (n=5). The five female principals that were included in this theme were two White, two Mexican American, and one Australian.

Qualitative Results

I identified a total of forty themes in the transcripts. A total of five themes emerged as noteworthy appearing in at least five transcripts. These themes are reported in summary form. The five emerging themes were: driven to achieve, spiritual, community leaders, involved in professional organizations, and community leaders.

Driven to Achieve

All participants interviewed mentioned that they set goals, and were driven by an inner voice to achieve their personal goals. This data mirrors research introduced in the review of literature. Accomplishing goals (Wesson, 1998) and sharing goals and visions (Duvall, 1980; Marcano, 1997) establishes a direct link to previous research. Data indicated that all nine female public school principals interviewed had a passion in their work. Excerpts demonstrating this theme are listed below:

I believe a typical American woman is a woman who wants it all. Who wants to be mom, be a provider, half of the provider. Because I believe that as an American woman that we provide, and then we meet goals with another half which is the male species. And then we work hard, we want to be mom, we want to be provider, we want to be executives or administrators. We want to be in charge and be able to juggle the schedule. I think that is the American woman, juggling all the time, American educator, American woman. (December, 2000)

Aspiring administrators make career moves that will maximize their potential for achieving personal goals (Marcano, 1997). Another woman interviewed who was hired as a principal within the last year describes how she personally set goals in her life. Personally, she focused on setting goals without time limits but, professionally goals had time constraints and action plans. The following excerpt describes her goal setting technique:

A goal that has been met and I have set goals in my life. I never put years in it. I never put time into it, but I do say that this is what I want done-someday or this is what I,m going to have done-someday. The most recent being here in this role. I'm a go-getter. I'm eager. I am very hyper, without coffee or any other stimulants like that. (December 2000)

Another principal emphasized the fact that she was willing to take risks to accomplish goals that she has set for herself and for her school. She describes herself as hard worker and unafraid to ask tough questions. The following excerpt describes this characteristic:

I am a perfectionist, very driven to excel and win. I am a risk taker who is not intimidated to ask questions or deal with hard issues· I am a hard worker who does not quit until the job is done. (December 2000)

Hard work is a theme that is prevalent throughout many of the interviews. This principal best describes how women sometimes feel when compared with males within the organization (Hagberg, 1998). The following excerpt is a personal perspective describing this characteristic:

We work hard. We work hard to prove ourselves, especially in a male-dominated workforce, it is hard to prove yourself. In education, however, the women have been the dominant figures, however, only in the classrooms. We (women) struggle and we work hard. (July, 1999)

Spiritual

One participant remembers a childhood experience that inspired her to make changes in her life. She did not want to be a statistic in her community. Her belief in God gave her strength to help her make it through difficult situations. Hagberg (1998) described women as being more motivating and inspirational than men. When asked what got her through difficult situations, she replied:

I think faith, and the belief that I am not going to be a statistic. I was reared in a very low impoverisheded area and I remember thinking, and smelling the septic tanks, and thinking, "I don,t want to live like this all my life." My parents tried, I don,t blame them. It was the only thing that they knew but I also attribute it to my parents because they did not have, and wanted to make sure we had. Their goal was for us to at least graduate from high school and not be pregnant, and that would suffice. After that they really didn't care much what we did. They were elated to know that both my sister and I went on to college. But again I was not going to be just another Mexican-American, straight-haired, person who grew up to be pregnant and barefoot. I saw that going on and that was not going to be me. Also, I believe that religion played a lot into it. My parents were very, very committed to the church and, thus, we were too as girls. We were there every Sunday, every Wednesday. (December, 2000)

I was not surprised that faith in God was a factor that was mentioned by all the principals interviewed. It was their faith that helped them through difficult situations and their belief that things would get better and that encouraged them during trying times. The following excerpt describes this belief:

My faith in God sustains me through my most difficult moments in life and in my work. I take each day as it is given to me and refuse to let a bad situation ruin it

for me, or others. I am forever the optimist and I look for the good in all. (December, 2000)

Involved in Professional Organizations

Literature supported the fact that networking with other professionals was an attribute of a successful female principal (Duvall, 1980; Hackney, 1999; Marcano 1997; Wesson, 1980). Every principal interviewed was a member of several professional organizations. Networking was an important characteristic that was identified by the principals interviewed. Professional growth and affiliation with profession organizations were important to the principals interviewed. Members of professional organizations can bond together to have a greater voice in legislation. Principals valued profession collaboration and professional dialogue. One principal reports:

I'm a member of TEPSA, Elementary Principals Supervisors Association. I,m also a member of most recently with the Texas Music Educators' Association. But those are the only organizations that I affiliate with. I attend seminars and workshops of other organizations but I just go as a non-member. (December, 2000)

Community Leaders

This characteristic was prevalent with principal being other-centered; they were sincerely concerned with making the world a better place to live and raise our children (Fennell, 1999; Hackney, 1999). One principal described what being successful meant with children and personally:

With children, are they making progress, they are making gains? Do they feel good about themselves? Do they like what they do? In my own success, it is. How do I feel about me as a person? What have I done to make the world a better place? So it would be from the people perspective. What kind of an impact have I made in the world? Have I made it a better place? (December, 2000)

The principals interviewed were not selfish. They were genuinely caring, concerned giving individuals with a mission in life (Fennell, 1999; Hackney, 1999; Wesson, 1998). It was not necessary for the principals to be personally honored for their accomplishment in their work. What they wanted most was to visually see changes, to be able to set a goal and see it through. Self-gratification was not their goal as explained in this excerpt:

I'm not a person who seeks gratification or wants to be exalted in anyway. Just to know that deep inside I had something to do with someone's success. Even if I don't get the credit for it, but knowing that things are getting better. I guess it

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would be kind of how Benjamin Franklin felt when he knew that everybody would be able to see at night. (December, 2000)

Personal satisfaction is achieved through hard work and perseverance (Hackney, 1999; Hagberg, 1998). Personal gratification is explained as making a positive difference in others lives. The following excerpt exhibits this idea:

For me personally, if I'm satisfied with what I'm doing, if I feel like what I'm doing is making a positive difference. When I really think about what I really like to do, it's to make things happen with a group of people. So, I guess I measure success as being able to produce some of those things. Make things happen, make a difference. (December, 2000)

As leaders mature, and achieve administrative roles, they are concerned with the influence they have on a greater number of individuals (Fennell, 1999). Daily decisions that are made by these principals have an impact on the entire school building and sometimes the entire community. One principal mentions, "As I move up the ladder in my career I am able to have more influence, for good, over a greater number of people."

Value Personal Relationships

As one might expect, principals valued personal relationship with students, staff, colleagues, and community members. Women envision their leadership through collaboration, shared problem solving, and shared decision-making (Fennell, 1999; Hackney, 1999; Marcano, 1997). Building relationship with others to achieve the goal and mission of the school was a common theme. One of the comments included:

Generally, people know that I am authentic, that I really do care about individuals in this organization but I also really care that in this organization we have high expectations. So just like I would expect a teacher in the classroom to have high expectations, but be very aware of individual needs, that,s what I think is important. Being a good communicator, being a good listener, being someone who is not caught up in the title. (December, 2000)

One principal emphasized the fact that the school and community needed to join together to accomplish a "common goal". She realized and valued personal relationships; when asked what do you attribute to your success, this is what she had to offer:

The fact that I am smart enough to realize that you need other people to accomplish things. No man is an island, if you want to use clichés. Everybody pulling together for a common good, a common goal. Utilizing the best that each has to offer. (December, 2000)

One principal included the fact that it is important to build relationship with community leaders. Everyone can work together as one empowered community. Hackney (1999) described this skill as a delegator that knows how to pull everyone together to work together for the common good of everyone involved.

Conclusions

Leadership has been the central focus of research in the field of educational administration. Most studies have been based on the experiences of white males (Blackmore, 1989; Capper, 1993; Glazer, 1991). Historically, leadership roles have been held by men (Capper, 1993; Sloan, 1999). The female principal,s role is diverse, fragmented, and involves numerous decisions daily. It is important for women to be able to identify and evaluate their own personal characteristics. Women must be conscious of what is perceived by others and develop strategies that are proactive in building success (Wesson, 1998). Participants were able to verbalize their personal insight about their character, which made them think about their inner values, beliefs and leadership styles. The sample (n=9) of female public school principals were selected from three different countries and five different ethnic backgrounds but all had similar personal characteristics. I believe that it is significant to note that participants in this study were from different cultures, different ethnic groups, and some from different countries. We can conclude in this study that despite different cultural, ethnic backgrounds, years of experience and age differences, all of these women faced the same challenges, and they share a common set of values and a similar belief system.

NOTE

At the discretion of the interviewees, the author will not disclose their names.

Dr. Leslie A. Holtkamp is a Summer, 2001 graduate from the Educational Leadership & Counseling program at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas.

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Appendix A. Interview outline modified and used for this study.

"Characteristics of Female Public School Principals"

1. What is your nationality?

2. What year were you born?

3. Where were you born?

4. Where were you educated?

5. What university did you attend?

6. What degree do you have?

7. What are the educational requirements for your job as principal?

8. What languages do you speak?

9. Other than school principal, what other professions have you had?

10. How many years do you have to teach in the classroom before you can become a principal?

11. What are your parents' education and their occupations?

12. What were your responsibilities as a girl growing up?

13. How many siblings do you have?

14. What is your birth order?

15. What are your siblings' occupations?

16. What are your hobbies and interests?

17. How many years of experience do you have in education?

18. Are you a member of any professional organizations?

19. Typically, what do other women from your country do for a living?

20. How do you personally measure success?

21. To what do you attribute your success?

22. What are your personal characteristics?

23. What inner strengths do you pull from in a difficult situation?

24. What are your future goals?

25. Is there anything you would like to share?

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